

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024

**BY EMAIL**

Our Ref: FOI 2281

Dear [REDACTED],

Your request for information was received on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested in relation to Drug Tariff Changes.

Please find a response attached.

**As part 21a/21b of the Northern Ireland Drug Tariff was amended on 1st May 2023 to reflect the requirement that instalment dispensing be used as an exception, primarily for the list of medicines detailed below, and remove its use for instances of life-threatening non-compliance.**

**To provide an overview of the potential impact to patients could you please provide a breakdown for the most recent 3 months prior to the change for which data is held:**

- 1) The total number of items supplied by instalment dispensing**
- 2) The total number of instalment dispensing fees paid to pharmacy contractors and dispensing doctors**
- 3) The total number of items supplied that fall under the the new list of drugs as listed in section 21b**
- 4) The total number of instalment dispensing fees paid to pharmacy contractors and dispensing doctors for items listed in section 21b**

**Section 21b**

**The drugs which may be prescribed in instalments will normally be categorised as:**

**Analgesics including opioids**



**Antidepressants**  
**Antiepileptics including gabapentinoids**  
**Antipsychotics**  
**Barbiturates**  
**Benzodiazepines**  
**CNS depressants**  
**Sedative antihistamines**  
**Skeletal muscle relaxants**  
**Stimulants including drugs to treat ADHD**  
**Triptans**  
**Z drugs**

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,  
2 Franklin Street,  
Belfast,  
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision-making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office – Northern Ireland  
10th Floor  
Causeway Tower  
9 James Street South  
Belfast  
BT2 8DN

Telephone: 0303 123 1114  
Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

*Karen Bailey.*

**Karen Bailey**  
Chief Executive